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MOVING THE LIBRARY AT DUTCHESS COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

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DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COLLEGE CAMPUSES OFTEN NECESSITATES THE MOVING OF A LIBRARY COLLECTION FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER. AT DUTCHESS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK, A PROCESS WAS DEVELOPED BY WHICH THE REGULAR STAFF OF THE LIBRARY AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL MOVED EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE IN A 3-DAY PERIOD. STUDENT VOLUNTEERS, WORKING UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH A CAREFULLY DEVELOPED PLAN, MOVED THE 21,000-VOLUME BOOK COLLECTION IN FOUR HOURS. DETAILS OF THE PLAN AND THE PROCESS ARE PRESENTED. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN "AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BULLETIN," VOLUME 61, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 1967. (WO)

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Moving the Library at Dutchess Community College

by Barbara L. Feret

"We did it in four hours! We really did!"

Students were amazed and proud. They had just finished transferring the 21,000 volumes of the Dutchess Community College Library from their crowded four-room location in Bowne Hall to a beautiful new library capable of holding 70,000 volumes. The transferral of the bulk of the stack collection had actually taken only four hours.

Counted under a different light, however, the move actually occupied a much longer span of time. While the beams and walls of the three-story building were still being put into place, books which could not be squeezed into the existing crowded stacks were cataloged and boxed. Strong, sturdy liquor boxes were used and, as the year progressed, this unusual "box-library" grew, drawing many flippant comments from college faculty and staff who happened to step into the back room.

The boxes were numbered and these numbers placed on author cards in a special card file. In this way, the location of every cataloged book which had been boxed was known, allowing for emergency retrieval of any volume. New books which were needed for immediate class use or were special in any way were not boxed, but placed on the shelves for circulation. Cataloging of all incoming books was continued until two months before the move. During this two-month interim, only essential books were cataloged and shelved. All others were left uncataloged but boxed. Again, these boxes were numbered (using a new number series) and the numbers recorded on author cards. When the day of upheaval came, there were no loose books in the technical processing room; all volumes were either on the stack shelves or in boxes; and the cataloger had been able to continue her work up until the last day.

• *Miss Feret is assistant librarian at Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie, New York.*

Detailed plans

The most carefully detailed plans of the entire move centered around three items: the transferral of equipment (microfilm readers, cabinets, files, etc.); the relocation of 500 boxes of periodicals (back issues) and over 350 current issues; and the transport of the bulk of the library collection (approximately 21,000 volumes in open stacks and reference areas).

Four months prior to the move, an inventory was made, identifying and numbering the separate factors involved. All equipment, from the cabinets containing art slides to the small world globe, was listed. The number of shelves available in the new library was determined and their locations noted in detail. A count was made of the number of volumes in the old library, carefully noting the number of shelves occupied by each section of the Dewey Classification. Many long afternoons were spent poring over figures, working and reworking the very real and important logistics of the move.

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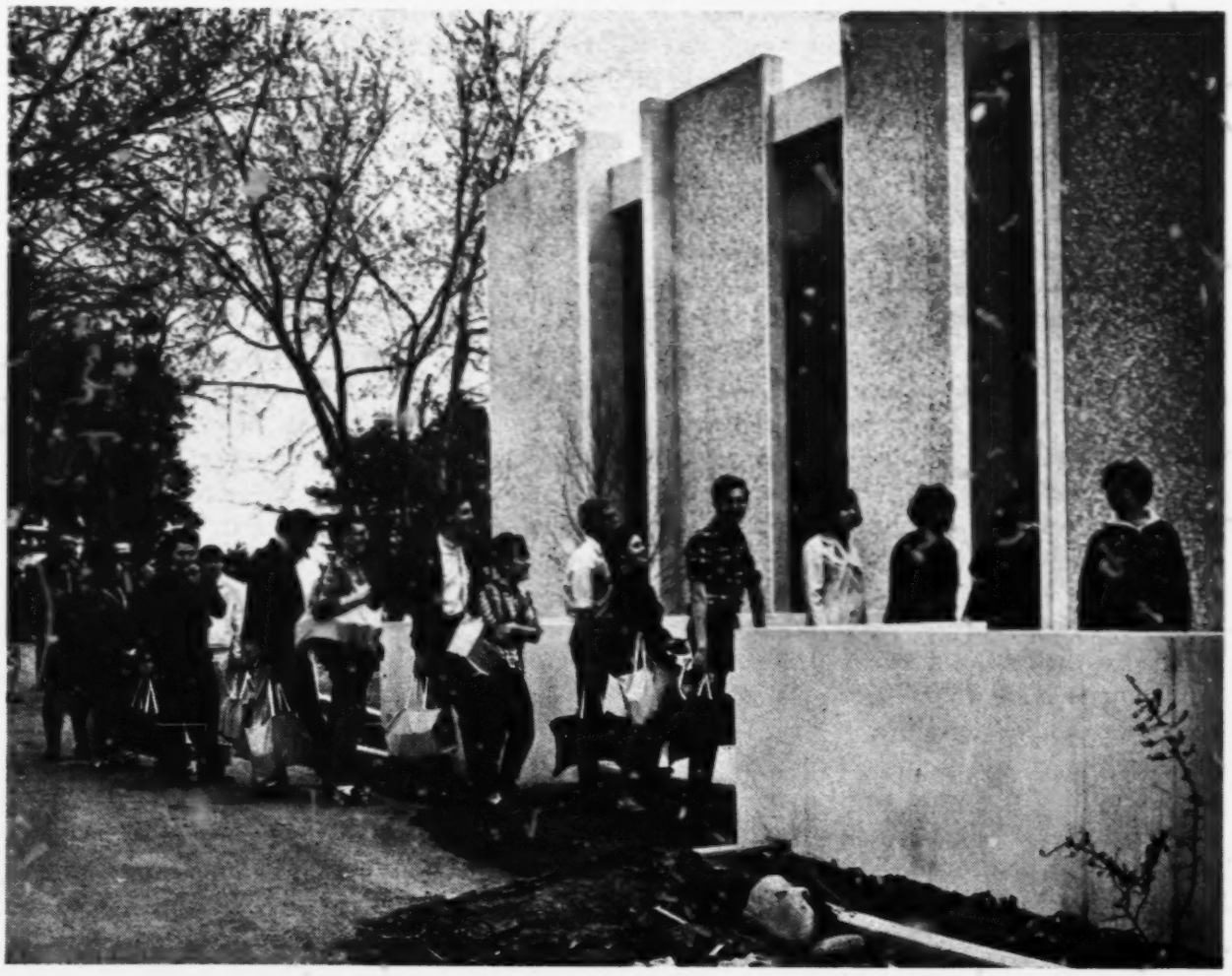

After careful deliberation, the following location plans were made: the basement floor would remain an open study area with no ranges being installed; volumes from 000 to 699 would be shelved on the first floor; the 700's, 400's, 800's, and 900's would occupy the second floor; the bottom and top shelves of all ranges would be left empty, and only 50 per cent of each of the remaining five shelves would be filled. Two ranges on the first floor would be reserved for the back files of periodicals. The shelving of the reference collection would be planned in detail, allowing many-volumed sets (encyclopedias, DAB, etc.) to occupy whole shelves while the intervening shelves would be half-full. Because of the large size of some of the reference volumes and back files of periodicals, shelving in these two sections would be readjusted, allowing six and five shelves per section instead of the usual seven.

With these location blueprints tentatively established (they underwent continual reassessment until the actual moving day), several discussions were held regarding the physical transferral of the books. Because of the close proximity of the new and old libraries, it was decided that student volunteers could be used effectively. A survey was made of the footage of shelving in the old library, and it was estimated that one foot of books per student could be moved without disarrangement or strain, and that these books could be transported by a human chain of approximately 150 students using shopping bags. Later, after a few trials with the heaviest and largest books in plastic and net containers, canvas bags 1½ ft. long and 1 ft. deep, with two handles on opposite sides, were ordered from a local army surplus store. These bags could comfortably contain one foot of books any size or weight; books were easily inserted and removed from them; they provided a protective covering for the books; and the two handles allowed students to carry the bag in one hand leaving the other free for balance. The

time interval for the round trip between the old and new libraries was paced out, and it was estimated that one foot of books could be deposited on the new library shelving every five to ten seconds.

The student volunteers were to be divided into three groups: first, there would be teams of "loaders" in the old library who would fill the empty canvas bags with books and move them to a central dispersal area; second, there would be "carriers" who would bring the bags from the old building to the new; and, finally, there would be teams of "shelvers" in the new library to remove the books from their bags and place them on the new shelves. In addition, a few "odd-job specialists," such as student library assistants who had been familiarized with the entire plan, would direct traffic and keep students and books in order.

Finally, the date was set. In order to enable the student body to continue using library resources despite the move, it was decided to transfer the entire library during the Easter vacation. Students were alerted and encouraged to sign out as many books as they might need (and a few extra) over the holidays. Equipment was tagged. Supplies were boxed. Shelves in the new library were adjusted and labeled. A final schedule of what was to move when was distributed, and supervisory posts were assigned to librarians. All was prepared and waiting.

The move begins

On the first day of the Easter vacation, the library began to move. Nine students, who were regular library assistants, reported to work. The entire moving plan was described to them in detail, and they were given a tour of the new building.

They were eager to begin. A special detail of boys began placing the reference collection in the canvas bags, foot by foot, while other students set the bags in orderly rows in the former reading room. When they had finished, the reference shelves were empty, and the collection was neatly and precisely arranged in brightly colored bags on the floor. Several girls carried bookends to the new library and inserted them halfway on the shelves to point out a stopping place for the "shelvers" on the big moving day. After lunch, the transferral of the 500 boxes of periodicals began. When it proved to be too tiring to go up and down the stairs carrying two or three boxes at a time, the students devised another carrying system by using book trucks to transport boxes via the elevator to the first floor of old Bowne Hall. Here they were picked up and carried a much shorter distance. After two hours of steady work, interspersed with songs to set the pace, the first library material had reached its new quarters and the first phase of the move completed.

The following day all was quiet in the old building. Empty reference shelves, long lines of colored canvas bags filled with books, and silent stacks testified that this was the final day for the old library. Early that morning, the campus maintenance crew had been at work, emptying the rooms of equipment, cabinets, files, and labeled boxes. The library was indeed no more than a skeleton.

The new library, by contrast, was alive, bursting with the first active day of its new life. The same nine students were busy at many tasks: moving boxed books to their proper locations and shelving some of them, bringing new equipment out of temporary storage, setting up the periodical indexes, emptying the old vertical file into the new, transferring catalog cards from the old catalog to the new, straightening up the new technical processing room, and setting up the microfilm files; in short, moving labeled items to their new locations and changing the old to the new. Enthusiasm reigned; they were interested in the function of every piece of equipment, the reason for the location of various rooms in the library. At the end of this second day, all were tired but well pleased with what had been done. There were even a few quiet moments left to sit in the new lounge chairs in front of the huge windows and enjoy the springtime view.

The big moving day dawned, bringing with it what all had hoped for—good weather. Ninety-two volunteer students appeared at 8:30 A.M. for a short briefing session, and at 9 o'clock the move began. As each student "carrier" entered the old library he received a number and picked up a bag of books. These he carried over to the new library, handing the number to a student charged with keeping

the numbers and, consequently, the bags of books in order. The "carrier" then gave the bag to a group of "shelvers," who promptly shelved the books and returned the empty bag to him. The empty bag was then returned to the loaders in the old library, who promptly refilled it and set it in the "pick-up" row again.

The reference collection, first to be moved, was quickly shelved (so quickly that the librarian in charge of shelving was hard put to see that the books landed on the proper shelves). But the next section presented a problem which had not been anticipated. It had been decided, first, to transfer the reference collection, because these were the heaviest volumes and were to be shelved in a separate room; second, to transfer the 700–999 sections to the top floor of the new library, while students were still fresh; and third, to transfer the remaining 000–699 sections to the first floor. When the 700's began arriving in the new library, shelving proved to be more difficult because allowances had not been made for the odd-sized art books which had to be turned and twisted to fit on the shelves. Time was lost and the "carriers" backed up in a long line. The "shelvers" were teased for their "slowness." Eventually a friendly rivalry developed between the teams of volunteers in the old and new libraries. Each tried to get ahead of the other. Along with books, the students carried jibes and comments, eager to outdo one another in witticisms as well as work.

After a break for coffee, the pattern evened out. Student "loaders" became more proficient at taking handfuls of books off the shelves and setting them back-side-up in their proper Dewey order in the canvas bags. They quickly filled the bags under the watchful supervision of a librarian who maintained accuracy and directed them to the proper shelves. The carriers developed a weary, but steady, walking pace.

The shelvers devised a more efficient "accordian" system of shelving the books, i.e., at the beginning of the move, carriers brought the bags directly to the stacks where the books were to be shelved. Later, carriers deposited the bags at one spot at the end of the stack area while shelvers formed themselves into a second human chain passing handfuls of books down to the proper shelves. As the distance from the deposit point to the proper shelf increased, the chain was lengthened by adding a person. As it decreased, the chain was shortened by deleting a person.

After a box lunch provided by the college, the move continued much more smoothly and efficiently. Refreshed and still enthusiastic, the students steadily depleted the old building and filled the new. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, with bag number 1728, the last weary carrier set down his load, and it was quickly shelved. The job was done.

Thanks to many months of meticulous planning and a group of wonderfully eager students, the new Dutchess Community College Library was open and ready for "business as usual." The entire library was moved in three days, but the students maintain that they did it in four hours—it was during that time that the main collection of 21,000 volumes was actually moved.

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